



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Summary

About this Release

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In its 1996 report "Time for Business", the Small Business Deregulation Task Force recommended the establishment of a clearance process for Commonwealth Government business surveys as a means of ensuring that these surveys are necessary, well designed, and place minimum load on business respondents. Funding for survey clearance was allocated from July 1997 onwards, and, in view of both its statistical expertise and its coordination role, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) was selected to conduct the process. In December 1997, clearance of surveys began. The entire suite of Commonwealth Government business surveys will be reviewed by June 1999. Those that do not satisfy the review criteria are not permitted to start or, in the case of existing ongoing surveys, to continue.

This paper outlines the genesis, objectives, development and operation of the Statistical Clearing House. Part A describes the objectives, challenges and framework within which developmental and operational activities are taking place. Part B focuses on the review criteria, procedures and systems, and the corresponding information about surveys that is required for the review and that is subsequently disseminated publicly via the Internet. Part C deals with the organisation of the Statistical Clearing House, including staffing, communications, coordination with other areas, and reporting and evaluation requirements. Part D summarises the findings of reviews conducted to date and the impact on respondent burden and quality. Part E raises the outstanding issues and outlines possible future directions.

The primary question that we would like to put to Methodology Advisory Committee members is whether the survey review criteria and the information required to enable their application are appropriate. We would also appreciate suggestions on any other aspects of the clearance process and, in particular, how we can best market it to survey managers, consultants providing survey design and operations services, and the businesses themselves.